

beneath ; the keel extending in a nearly straight line for almost two-thirds of its length, and thus terminating abruptly : sheaths of the oviduct black, hairy, about two-thirds of the length of the abdomen : legs bright yellow ; tips of the tarsi black : wings limpid ; fore wings slightly clouded with yellow beneath the ulna ; nerves yellow ; ulna much shorter than the humerus ; radius not more than one-third of the length of the ulna ; cubitus extremely short ; stigma very small. Length of the body  $1\frac{1}{4}$  line ; of the wings 2 lines.

Found on the banks of the river Lea in July. This is probably the female of *C. Ærope* (see Ann. of Nat. Hist. xiv. 182).

*On the Habits of the Tawny Owl, Strix Stridula.*

By RALPH CARR, Esq.

This bird does not seem to be known as a bold and rapacious robber of the nests of some of our stronger birds at the time when it is feeding its own young. It has been protected now for a few years at Dunston Hill. In 1844 a pair of tawny owls reared and ushered into the world three hopeful young, after having fed them assiduously upon the trees for many weeks after they had left the nest. The food must often have consisted in great part of worms, snails, and slugs, for the old birds brought it every minute from the ground in the immediate vicinity of the trees where the young were perched. This however might only be considered as a whet to their appetites before dinner ; for the parents made repeated and persevering attacks upon three or four magpie nests, sometimes during half an hour at a time. As the defence was spirited and gallant, they were often repulsed ; but, finally, I found the remains of young magpies under the favourite perch of the young owls, and one morning the bloody head and feathers of an old magpie, conspicuous from its size and the want of any cerous skin about the beak. This then, I thought, must have been taken when roosting. In 1845 the old owls alone were seen, and they passed the summer in sedate retirement, and seemed to rest from the labours of propagation ; neither did they molest the magpies. But in 1846 they began to be very active early in the spring, and by the beginning of May again had their young owlets out upon the branches. Walking out about nine o'clock one evening, I heard a pertinacious attack going on against a pair of magpies that had their nest in the top of a very tall sycamore. At last, instead of the frantic chattering of the poor magpies, one of them began to shriek in agony like a hare when caught in a noose ; and it was evident the owl was endeavouring to drag it out—the mother bird—by the head from the entrance of the nest. I ran down to the spot to prevent the perpetration of such murder, and arrived in time to separate the combatants by striking against the stem of the tree with a stick. Before the next morning the young of our only pair of rooks had disappeared from the nest, in a situation where nothing but the owls could have injured them. This was too bad ; a decree went forth against the young owls, and they paid the penalty of their voracious appetites.

It is thus evident that the magpie's instinct in arching over her

nest is necessary to enable her and her mate to defend it against rapacious birds. Probably the raven, the buzzard, and the kite, may be all disposed to make unfriendly visits, wherever their race has not been exterminated by pitiless gamekeepers. But it is evident that the tawny owl is a formidable enemy. The reluctance of the rook to build out of society may also be better understood, as it cannot defend its open nest against the owl at night; and also one reason why the instinct of the daw leads it always to seek the shelter of a hole, although, as Mr. Waterton remarks, it appears to be as hardy a bird as the rook. That wisdom and beneficence which never err may have given them instincts for other and more important ends than human eyes may ever be able to descry, but it is always gratifying when we think we can in part understand the utility and design of differences so striking.—*From the Transactions of the Tyneside Naturalists' Field Club*, vol. i. part 1. p. 20.

*Description of a species of Haliotis, supposed to be new.*

By C. B. ADAMS, Prof.

*Haliotis ponderosa*. H. magna, ovata, crassissima, convexa; striis incrementi magnis, irregularibus; rugis concentricis, irregularibus, subnodosis; spira elevata, subterminali; foraminibus quatuor, magnis; externe rubra, intus maculis plurimis rubris viridibusque iridescente.

Shell ovate, convex, ponderous, with coarse unequal incremental striæ and concentric ridges (not folds), and a few broad low tubercles on the ridges; spire elevated, subterminal; four perforations open, the inner one very large; exterior surface brick-red; inner surface elegantly iridescent with innumerable shades of delicate red, purplish red, and green.

Length  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in.; breadth  $6\frac{2}{3}$  in.; depth within  $3\frac{1}{8}$  in.

Comparison with the well-known *H. rufescens*, Swains., will render a figure unnecessary. A large specimen of Swainson's shell before me has exactly the same superficial dimensions, but is only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep. *H. ponderosa* is nearly or quite destitute of the spiral waves of *H. rufescens*, is of a darker red without, wants the red inner margin of the outer lip, and within has the clouds of iridescent colours remarkably small and numerous, while in *H. rufescens* they are remarkably large. It is more ponderous than any *Haliotis* which we have seen, weighing 2 lbs. 2 oz. avoirdupois.

Zoological Museum, Amherst College. Hab. — ?

Not finding this species in Reeve's very complete and excellent monograph, I have ventured to describe it as new.—*From Silliman's Journal for July 1848.*

*Cremastochilus in Ant Nests.* By S. S. HALDEMAN.

Our ant-nests are similar to those of Europe, in harbouring various insects. Among these are *Aphis*, *Coccus*, *Batrisus*, *Hister*, *Heterius*, and the singular genus of *Lamellicornia* mentioned above.